

Holiday Gift Guide

Plan Your Holiday Shopping and Entertaining Here

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Santa can fill grownups' stockings, with these treats

By Caron Golden
Copley News Service

Once filled with the special treat of an orange or perhaps, sadly, with a piece of coal, holiday stockings lined up along the mantelpiece can board whatever special gift the imagination and pocket-book can come up with.

When it comes to getting gifts, adults are not all that different from kids. They yearn for a treat that reflects their interests — something fun, perhaps, something a little unusual, something that lets them know you were truly thinking of them.

There are so many ways you can go in stocking stuffers. You can mix and match presents, complementing a large gift under the tree with some special accessories. You can create a theme, with all the gifts having something in common. Or you could find small treasures that reflect the different interests of the object of your attention.

For instance, if the recipient has just gotten a new job, why not pick up some fun office gifts? A new frame for a photo, a streamlined pen or funky desk clock are just some items you can pull together to show your affection and support.

Or you can create your own theme. If you know that she loves sunflowers, find a variety of interesting sunflower trinkets — a hair band, earrings, a pin, a box of note cards, a scarf — all will let her know that you care about her interests.

Other themes you can play off of are cooking (lots of possibilities there with kitchen gadgets), gardening (seed packs, miniature garden tools for indoors, plant tags), football (mugs, T-shirts or caps sporting the logo of a favorite team) and the Internet (magazine subscriptions, gift certificate for time on-line, a pocket guide to the Web).

ELECTRIC INTERESTS

When all else fails, there are always the little trinkets that you know they like — because they have some of them already. What counts is knowing what is meaningful to them and you just want to give them even more beauty.

Such as?

- Lavender or other scented sachets. Even if she already has some, their scent does eventually run out. She can put them in her chest of drawers, in the linen closet, on the shelves of her clothes closet — anywhere she likes to have a faint scent.
- Favorite cosmetics and a small travel pouch. If you know she likes a special hand lotion or powder, surprise her with it at the holidays.

tion and seek healthful choices on the buffet.

Experts advise holiday revelers to limit their alcohol intake. Alcohol has no nutritional value and the calories contained in beer, wine or mixed drinks are not burned as quickly as in other foods and beverages. One and a half ounces of distilled alcohol (about a shot glass full) contains 100 calories. Alcohol not only stimulates your appetite but lowers your guard — and your resolve to avoid certain foods. The best advice is to allow yourself one drink, then switch to carbonated water or diet soda.

Whether you're hosting a holiday party or attending one, encourage guests to go for a long, leisurely walk after dinner. Exercise not only burns up calories, but is a good way of eliminating holiday stress.

There is some good news to all this. Many of the holiday foods we eat — vitamins believed to lower the risk of heart disease and other illnesses. Sweet potatoes, cranberries, winter squash, potatoes, carrot/raisin salad, broccoli and pumpkin pie are all rich in vitamins C, E and beta carotene.

"Anti-oxidants in these foods are believed to increase the levels of 'good' cholesterol that helps eliminate plaque-forming cholesterol in some people," says Nancy Anderson, nutritionist for the Emory Heart Center in Atlanta.

Whatever eating approach you embrace this holiday season, it's important to set realistic goals. Don't beat yourself up if you gain a few pounds, but make losing those extra pounds a priority in the new year.

And remember, just because you have a lot of goodies lying around doesn't mean you have to eat them. Bring leftover party foods, candy and desserts to work to share with your colleagues or make up a plate for your neighbors.

Hangover Help

If you overindulge at a party and wake up with a hangover the next morning, try one of these remedies:

- Eat some honey, which will supply fructose to help the body metabolize alcohol. Honey on a cracker or piece of toast before or after drinking alcohol may even prevent a hangover.
- Drink fluids that contain minerals and salts to battle dehydration, such as bouillon. (CNS)

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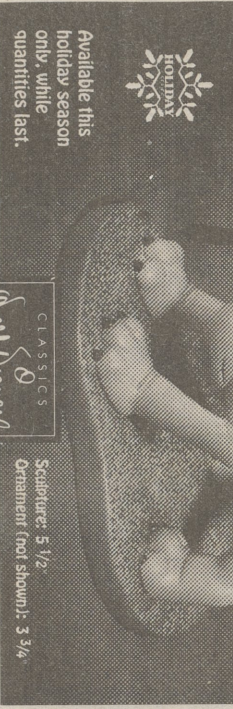
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Pluto rings in the holidays.

Pluto has a tall-waisted, good time heifera Mickey from the Christmas tree. This lovable pup, the 1996 "Holiday Series" sculpture and ornament, ends up with colorful ornaments and a sod star on his tail.

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Holiday fun

(continued from page 6)

Instead of traditional high-fat cream cheese dips, make a low-fat sour cream dip or nonfat bean dip. Serve with low-fat baked tortilla chips instead of regular chips.

- Use applesauce or yogurt in lieu of oil, butter or margarine for muffins, quick breads and cookies.
- Use egg whites or egg substitutes instead of real eggs for baking.
- Use evaporated skim milk in sauces instead of whole milk or cream.
- Use cocoa powder instead of baking chocolate for baked goods and desserts.

Postal pet peeves run high during the holidays. So if you want your package to arrive safely and in one piece, here's the scoop:

- No masking duct or transparent tape, please. These tapes do not provide the strength necessary for secure closures. Choose a strong plastic, water-activated paper or reinforced tape 2 inches or more in width. Basicest way to be sure your tapes OK? Buy it at a post office or postal store.
- Use a new, corrugated box. According to UPS, you should use a box large enough to allow room for cushioning material if needed.
- Bubble pack, plastic foam peanuts (always keep these away from small children) and crumpled paper work.
- If you reuse a box, make sure it's in rigid condition with no damage. Remove old labels. Also, postal services sell inexpensive boxes. There's no need to reuse an old, flimsy one.

Label packages properly. How? Always include the receiver's ZIP code with complete street address, including the apartment number. For rural or post office boxes, it's a good idea to include a phone number, just in case.

- Place the label on top of the box. A common belief is the more addresses and the larger the letter-spoken man. One address label avoids confusion.
- Always cross out old addresses on used boxes, include your full return address (and ZIP code), and try to avoid putting the address label over a seam or on top of closure tape. For added protection it's advisable to also place a label inside the package.
- Check the weight. If your package is especially heavy, Postal services usually require special stickers for extra-heavy or odd-shape packages.
- Mail boxes early. That way, you'll avoid long lines and late packages, and please eager friends and family.

Shipping tips

By Lee Littlewood
Copley News Service

Christmas Shopping ...easy and enjoyable

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